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WEDNESDAY
JULY 28, 1954

Rain, cold, wind did not daunt us. Our first stop was Stourhead in Wiltshire, a marvelous Gibbs (who also designed Mereworth) structure, now a National Trust property containing many fine [redacted] objects. It has always belonged to the great Hoare banking family, who had the luck or prescience to employ the younger Chippendale to make much of the furniture. The gardens, artificial grotto, follies, temples, Lakes, are almost incredibly elaborate and pleasing.

We lunched at the Ship Inn at Mere, where I cut my thirst with three bottles of Bass. Earlier in the day we had also visited the former abbey, now the home of the Talbots, at what must be the prettiest village in England, Leacock. The Gothic, Georgian house with cloisters, and the village, have been conveyed to the National Trust by Miss Talbot, now in her eighties.

Our last stop of the day was at Wilton, a few miles outside Salisbury. In spite of the splendid things we have seen on this little tour, Wilton eclipses all. The Van Dyck room, of which one always sees photographs, is in reality almost unbelievable, with its Kent and Chippendale furniture and its paintings, commissioned from one of the world's greatest portraitists, tailored expressly for the setting. Lord and Lady Pembroke kindly assigned us a special guide, who was expert in Wilton's history.

We struck London about 7:30 p.m. to find a distressing message from Paris that Carlos was seriously ill. We had intended to go to the theatre, and had seats for "I am a Camera". E. cancelled out to telephone to Isabelle, Robert, the veterinary, et al. Nancy had already seen the spectacle, so Miss Hill and I attended. The play was amusing and well presented. At eleven we all sat down to a prodigious dinner at Nancy's.

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